

## **ENGINE 101**

**May 24, 2005**

**Honorable Mayor and City Council,**

**Before removing Engine 101 from service, I urge you to consider the following facts.**

**When Long Beach lost the Fire Protection contract with Signal Hill, Engine 23 was not moved back to Station 16 where it originally came from. That Engine and 12 Firefighter positions were eliminated. This was not only a loss for Signal Hill, but a major loss of fire protection for the citizens of Long Beach. Engine 23 answered calls in our city over 50% of the time from the station in Signal Hill. That response has been eliminated for the citizens of central, west and north Long Beach.**

**Engine 101 at Station 1 is a specialized piece of equipment that responds to calls throughout the entire city. This loss will impact all citizens and will be the second engine taken out of service in the past 2 years.**

**I served as Captain at Station 1 for 11 years and we were one of the busiest stations in Long Beach. That was before the following developments took place:**

- 1. 9/11 and the new terrorist threats**
- 2. The Pike Project**
- 3. Port expansion**
- 4. New high-rise residential and commercial development**
- 5. Increase truck and rail traffic entering and leaving the Port**
- 6. New cruise ship destination**
- 7. Aquarium of the Pacific**

**In 1995, while serving as Fire Chief, I notified the City Manager of the need for additional fire service resources in the downtown area if the City continued to develop as projected. The Management Team at that time agreed that we would have to look at increasing the fire response in the downtown area. In the past ten years, the City has grown and redeveloped, but no new fire service resources were added.**

**The loss of Engine 101 will impact our downtown, our citizens, our Mutual Aid response during the summer brush fire season, and the health and safety of our firefighters. If Engine 101 is eliminated, Engine 1 will answer approximately 6,000 calls a year. That is 16 responses in every 24-hour period. If the average call is 30 minutes, this leaves little time for firefighters to conduct training and routine maintenance on the station and equipment.**

I respectfully request that you reconsider the elimination of Engine 101. Long Beach has always had one of the finest Fire Departments in the United States. Our citizens deserve no less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold Omel".

Harold Omel  
Long Beach Fire Chief (Retired)